IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as indicated herein.

Please cancel claims 5, 7, 17, 19 and 29.

1. (currently amended) A method for providing a switch user functionality in a server-agent environment in an information technological (IT) network in which ~~at least one~~ an agent runs on a node of the IT network, comprising:

generating a switch user (SU) certificate ~~using public-key cryptography~~ upon receiving a request to switch from a first user account presently used on the node to ~~another~~ a second user account;

signing the SU certificate with a signature using a private key based on public-key cryptography;

sending the SU certificate to the agent;

authenticating the signature with a public key that is a counterpart of the private key;

checking ~~the~~ correctness of the SU certificate; and

performing the requested switch to the ~~other~~ second user account provided that the SU certificate is correct.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the server-agent environment comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is a management agent running on a managed node.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate is generated by a designated server.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the agent forwards the received SU certificate to a domain controller which checks the correctness of the SU certificate and allows the agent to perform the requested switch user.

5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5 1, wherein the public key is made public within the network or within a domain of the network in which the correctness of the SU certificate is checked.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of checking the correctness of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU certificate originates from a designated server and has not been modified.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate contains no password relating to the second user account to which the switch is to be performed.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises the an account user name to which the for the second user account is to be switched and an identification of the node for which the switch is to be performed.

11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises a time stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of checking comprises verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been used before, by means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

13. (currently amended) A computer program product including program code for providing a switch user functionality in a server-agent environment in an information technological (IT) network in which at least one an agent runs on a node of the IT network, said program code for:

generating a switch user (SU) certificate using public-key cryptography upon receipt of a

request to switch from a first user account presently used on the agent to ~~another~~ a

second user account;

signing the SU certificate with a signature using a private key based on public-key

cryptography;

sending the SU certificate to the agent;

authenticating the signature with a public key that is a counterpart of the private key;

checking ~~the~~ correctness of the SU certificate; and

performing the requested switch to the ~~other~~ second user account provided that the SU

certificate is correct.

14. (original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the server-agent
environment comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is management
agent running on a managed node.

15. (original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate is
generated by a designated server.

16. (original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the agent forwards the
received SU certificate to a domain controller which checks the correctness of the SU certificate
and allows the agent to perform the requested switch user.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim ~~17~~ 13, wherein the public
key is made public within the network or within a domain of the network in which the
correctness of the SU certificate is checked.

19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the ~~step of~~ checking the correctness of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU certificate originates from a designated server and has not been modified.

21. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate contains no password relating to the second user account ~~to which the switch is to be performed~~.

22. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate comprises ~~the~~ an account name ~~to which the~~ for the second user account ~~is to be switched~~ and an identification of the node for which the switch is to be performed.

23. (original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate comprises a time stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

24. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the ~~step of~~ checking comprises verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been used before, by means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

25. (currently amended) A system for managing objects in an information technological (IT) network having a network management server and ~~at least one management~~ an agent which runs on a managed node of the IT network, said system provides a switch user functionality and comprises:

    ~~an SU~~ a switch user (SU) certificate generation component ~~which uses~~ that generates an SU certificate upon receiving a request to switch from a first user account presently used on the node to a second user account, and signs the SU certificate with a signature using a private key based on public-key cryptography;

    an SU certificate sending component which sends the certificate to the agent;

    an SU certificate checking component that authenticates the signature with a public key that is a counterpart of the private key, and checks correctness of the SU certificate; and

a user account switching component performing the requested switch provided that the SU

certificate is correct.

26. (original) The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate generation component is a

part of the management server.

27. (original) The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate checking component is a

part of a domain controller.

28. (original) The system of claim 25, further comprising a public key publication

component.

29. (canceled)